

Senate Resolution 445

By: Senators Unterman of the 45th, Reed of the 35th, Johnson of the 1st and Orrock of the 36th

AS PASSED

A RESOLUTION

Creating the Joint Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Minors Study Commission; to provide for the membership, powers, duties, and mission of the commission; to provide for related matters; and for other purposes.

WHEREAS, across the State of Georgia, children are being forced to engage in prostitution, escort services, stripping, pornography, and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation; and

WHEREAS, Georgia, especially the metropolitan Atlanta area, has become a hub for child sexual exploitation, with children trafficked from around the state, from other states, and from other countries; and

WHEREAS, children between the ages of 11 and 16, but as young as ten, are being marketed to adults for sex; and

WHEREAS, victims of commercial sexual exploitation often suffer extreme conflicts in the home, parental neglect, physical or sexual abuse, homelessness, poverty, housing instability, educational failure, emotional problems, running away, and other social ills that lead to their recruitment into prostitution; and

WHEREAS, children who are commercially sexually exploited often become victims of rape, assault, robbery, and murder and are at greater risk for drug and alcohol abuse, depression, suicide attempts, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other psychiatric disorders, developmental and social delays, unplanned pregnancy, and sexually transmitted disease (STD) and HIV infection; and

WHEREAS, children who miss or drop out of school and become victimized through commercial sexual exploitation are likely to need intensive counseling and other public social services well into adulthood.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA that there is created the Joint Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Minors Study Commission to be composed of 12 members. The President of the Senate shall appoint three members of the Senate as members of the commission and shall designate one of such members as cochairperson. The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint three members of the House of Representatives as members of the commission and shall designate one of such members as cochairperson. One member shall be a local police chief appointed by the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police. One member shall be a district attorney appointed by the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of the State of Georgia. One member shall be a juvenile court judge appointed by the Council of Juvenile Court Judges. One member shall be a superior court judge appointed by the Council of Superior Court Judges of Georgia. One member shall be a public defender appointed by the Georgia Public Defender Standards Council and one member shall be a representative of child advocacy appointed by the Office of the Child Advocate. The cochairpersons shall call all meetings of the commission.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission shall undertake a study of the conditions, needs, issues, and problems mentioned above or related thereto and recommend any action or legislation which the commission deems necessary or appropriate. The commission may conduct such meetings at such places and at such times as it may deem necessary or convenient to enable it to exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and accomplish the objectives and purposes of this resolution. In conducting such study, the commission shall study current law and policy in Georgia and other states and shall elicit views from experts in the fields of child welfare, juvenile justice, social work, mental health, and public health as well as input from child victims and adult survivors of commercial sexual exploitation. The commission shall examine recent policy and social science reports on child commercial sexual exploitation, including, but not limited to, its effect on child well-being and community safety. Also, the commission shall review services that are currently available to this population in Georgia, as well as best practices for serving commercially sexually exploited children from other jurisdictions. The legislative members of the commission shall receive the allowances provided for in Code Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. Members of the commission other than legislative

members shall receive no compensation for their services on the commission, and they shall not be reimbursed for expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties as members of the commission. All funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from funds appropriated to the Senate and the House of Representatives. The expenses and allowances authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any legislative member of the commission for more than five days unless additional days are authorized. In the event the commission makes a report of its findings and recommendations, with suggestions for proposed legislation, if any, such report shall be made on or before December 31, 2008. The commission shall stand abolished on January 1, 2009.